

The distressed crew were once more ashore, but as castaways on an unknown land. They finally arrived at the conclusion that it was an unpeopled region, for the only animals at first seen were foxes, and these showed a complete fearlessness of man, of such a kind as to indicate that they had never before come in contact with him. There was no wood but driftwood on the island—for such it proved to be—and that was scanty. Thus, in order to shelter themselves from the inclemency of the weather, the survivors were reduced to digging holes in the sand, which they covered with sails.

So the winter was spent, and more men died, among them Behring himself. The island which they had reached was that since known as Behring Island, situated some 90 or 100 miles from the Kamtschatkan coast to which they had hoped to return.

Adapting themselves as well as they could to the circumstances, the crew found that the sea-otter which frequented the island afforded a source of food. During the winter a whale was also washed ashore which materially assisted in their sustenance; but before the end of their stay, it was discovered that the sea-cow, which frequented the shores in herds, afforded a much more toothsome and wholesome flesh than that of any of the other animals. A method of hunting the sea-cow was established, and it is largely to the existence of this animal that the ultimate salvation of a part of Behring's crew was due.

This brings us to the main subject of my paper, the sea-cow or manatee of the North Pacific; but before speaking further of the sea-cow itself, it will be in order to state that in the following summer—that of 1742—a new but much smaller vessel was constructed from the wreck of the original one, in which, setting sail in August, the survivors managed in ten days to return to Avacha Bay in Kamtschatka.

With them they brought some trophies from the newly discovered lands: amongst these the skins of the sea-otter, or sea-beaver as it was called by the Russians at the time; the pursuit of which was the moving cause of the numerous Russian expeditions of following years. A new avenue for the enterprise of the fur-traders had been opened up and skins even more valuable than those of the sable allured them to